

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11
HA-05 IO-13 /100 W
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R 130700Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 820
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMCONSUL IBADAN
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 853

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, DM, KN, KS, GV

SUBJ: BENIN/GUINEA: SEKOU TOURE VISIT

1. GUINEA PRESIDENT AHMED SEKOU TOURE'S MAY 25-27 STATE VISIT TO BENIN WAS SOMEWHAT OF A DISAPPOINTMENT TO GOVERNMENT OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BENIN (GPRB). ALTHOUGH BENIN WELCOMED TOURE AS THE "DOYEN" OF AFRICAN REVOLUTIONARY LEADERS AND GAVE HIM MOST OSTENTATIOUS CEREMONIAL TREATMENT TO DATE, TOURE, TO PRESIDENT KEREKOU'S THINLY VEILED IRRITATION, DEVIATED FROM STANDARD RHETORICAL CONDEMNATIONS OF IMPERIALISM EXPECTED OF VISITING REVOLUTIONARY CHIEFS OF STATE. INSTEAD OF SUPPORTING BENIN'S POSITION ON SPECIFIC "ANTI-IMPERIALIST" ISSUES (WESTERN SAHARA, KOREAN UNIFICATION, SOUTHERN AFRICA, ETC), TOURE LIMITED HIMSELF TO GENERAL CONDEMNATION OF IMPERIALISM IN ALL ITS FORMS.
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HE THEN URGED BENIN TO CONCENTRATE ON CONSOLIDATING ITS REVOLUTION, ENDING TRIBALISM AND ABOVE ALL ERADICATING FETISHISM. VISIT CONCLUDED WITHOUT A FINAL COMMUNIQUE. INSTEAD, GPRB MARKED OCCASION BY RENAMING COTONOU'S MAIN STREET (AVENUE CARDINAL STEINMETZ) THE AVENUE SEKOU TOURE.

2. COMMENT: ACCORDING TO THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR, WHO HAS GOOD

SOURCES AT GPRB FORMIN, REASON NO FINAL COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED WAS THAT TOURE REFUSED TO AGREE TO INCLUSION OF REFERENCE TO REUNIFICATION OF KOREA ON NORTH KOREAN TERMS. N. KOREAN EMBASSY IN COTONOU APPARENTLY HAD PUT GREAT PRESSURE ON PRESIDENT KEREKOU TO INSIST THAT KOREA QUESTION BE ADDRESSED IN FINAL COMMUNIQUE. A STALEMATE DEVELOPED WHEN KEREKOU REFUSED TO REMOVE KOREA LANGUAGE FROM DRAFT COMMUNIQUE AND TOURE WOULD NOT ACCEPT DRAFT CONTAINING IT.

3. SOVIETS WERE ALSO UNHAPPY ABOUT TOURE'S PERFORMANCE. SOVIET CHARGE TIMOFEEV HAD NOTHING GOOD TO SAY ABOUT VISIT. HE TOLD US THAT TOURE HAD CEASED TO HAVE AN "INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK" AND WAS NOW SIMPLY TRYING TO PRODUCE HIS OWN VERSION OF SENGHOR'S "NEGRITUDE," A CONCEPT TIMOFEEV DISMISSED WITH COMTEMPT.

4. AS FOR IMPACT OF VISIT ON BENINESE THEMSELVES, TELLING THE CITIZENS OF THE COUNTRY WHERE VODOO ORIGINATED AND WHERE FETISH PRIESTS STILL DOMINATE FAMILY LIFE TO BURN THEIR FETISHES STIRRED UP CONSIDERABLE RESENTMENT. WITH UNINTENDED IRONY THAT CHARACTERIZES THE GPRB, PRESIDENT KEREKOU AT THE AIRPORT REITERATED TOURE'S WORDS ABOUT FETISH-BURNING, ALL THE WHILE CLUTTING HIS STAFF OF OFFICE WHICH IS INLAID WITH POWERFUL VODOO SYMBOLS. THOMPSON

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